

THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

EFRAIN LUNA-RODRIGUEZ,

Defendant.

CASE NO. CR20-0092-JCC

ORDER

This matter comes before the Court on the parties' joint motion to proceed with a guilty plea by videoconference. (Dkt. No. 647). The Court hereby GRANTS the motion for the reasons explained below.

Under General Order 04-20, felony pleas and sentencings may proceed by video or telephone conferencing if "the district judge in a particular case finds for specific reasons that the plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice." W.D. Wash. General Order 04-20 (March 30, 2020); *see also* W.D. Wash. General Order 14-21 (Dec. 22, 2021) (extending duration of General Order 04-20).

The parties have reached a plea agreement and Mr. Luna-Rodriguez would like to enter a guilty plea in accordance with that agreement to move forward and resolve the matter. (Dkt. No. 647 at 1.) But an in-person proceeding would require travel from Southern California, where he is currently subject to pretrial supervision. (*Id.* at 3.) Rather than delay a change of plea until

1 COVID conditions abate, Mr. Luna-Rodriguez would like to enter a plea now by
2 videoconference. (*Id.*) Mr. Luna-Rodriguez has a strong interest in the speedy resolution of his
3 plea process, and further delays would prolong the stress and anxiety he faces as the current
4 public health situation creates uncertainty for in-person court proceedings. *See* W.D. Wash.
5 General Order 01-22 (Jan. 7, 2022) (imposing limitations for certain in-person activities based on
6 the recent uptick in COVID-19 cases).

7 The Court FINDS that, for the reasons described above, the plea hearing cannot be
8 delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice. Accordingly, the motion for a remote
9 change of plea hearing (Dkt. No. 647) is GRANTED.

10 DATED this 14th day of January 2022.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John C. Coughenour", written over a horizontal line.

John C. Coughenour
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE